Call for National Consensus on Subsidy

*199. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR:
SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Economists have given a call for a national consensus on subsidies;

(b) if so, the details of their suggestions; and

(c) the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) and (b) Finance Minister met a group of Economists on January 12, 1999 as a part of his pre-Budget discussions. In the meeting, the Economists made a number of suggestions which inter-alia included the following: emphasis on expenditure control and quality of fiscal deficit; cap on government debt; professionalisation of Public Sector Enterprise management; strategic disinvestment to raise resources for retiring government debt and financing social sector; liberalisation in the agricultural sector to reap full benefits of reforms; step up investment in the agricultural sector; promote housing sector to generate more income and employment; encourage export growth; take measures to mobilise non-resident Indians (NRI) savings to take care of likely flucutations/decline in the flow from Foreign Institutional Investors; remove customs surcharge and reduce spread and average rate of import duties etc.

(c) Suggestions made by professionals and associations are kept in view while formulating appropriate policies by the Government.

Programmes of Doordarshan and Air

*200. SHRI ONKAR SINGH LAKHAWAT: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any scheme regarding telecasting and broadcasting of programmes relating to patriotism, character building, social harmony and didacticism oriented through Doordarshan and All India Radio;

(b) whether Government propose to put a ban on the showing of women in Doordarshan advertisements as a consumer commodity; and

(c) whether Government propose to check the cultural pollution being spread by the private channels?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) Such programmes are regularly carried by Doordarshan and All India Radio.

(b) The advertising code of Prasar Bharati does not permit such projection of women and as such, the question of a ban by the Government does not arise.

(c) Amendments to the Cable TV Networks (Regulations) Act are being considered to make the programme and advertising codes uniformaly applicable to all private satellite channels, which are normally received through cable operators.

WRITEEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Losses suffered by Indian Airlines

1396. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Airlines earned a profit of crores of rupees during last year and has suffered a